

Just the facts ma'am: Outcome-based evaluation of FVRL

By Danielle LaFrance.

"Just the facts ma'am: Outcome-based evaluation of FVRL," presented by Gillian McLeod and Kim Davison, Fraser Valley Regional Library, was an informative session with plenty to take away. Starting from the position that "numbers don't lie," the speakers described their strategy for ensuring public programs' continued success. This process involves itemizing and accounting for all the major components of a program roll out from values to budgets to staff obligations in a comprehensive Program Management Template.

FVRL is currently evaluating all their new customer services, system-wide programs for the public, and staff workshops using this template. Although they prefaced the PMT is a big report, its length is necessary to provide a thorough evaluation of new and old programs. It also presents an opportunity to remind staff about the values inherent to the programs they run as well as to reinvigorate professional practice. McLeod dramatically asked participants to imagine what the evaluative process

would look like for Mother Goose Story Time. Librarians understand it's a vital service but is it still meeting the needs it originally intended? Can librarians describe the value of this service and any changes that are needed to meet with new learning patterns? Often these questions send a shiver down our professional backs – one federal cut, two federal cuts, three federal cuts, more!

FVRL's approach to evaluation is proactive no matter how a program is rolled out. It motivates staff to consider the value of programs and to excite programs rather than leave them fixed. McLeod and Davison generously shared the PMT with participants, a gesture that highlights the necessity to share resources with systems and libraries wide.

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